

Amendments to the Claims

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously presented) In a communication system wherein web content is transmitted over a communication path from a content server to a client station in response to a request from the client station, a method comprising the following functions carried out while the web content is in transit from the content server to the client station and has thus left the content server but has not yet arrived at the client station:

receiving the web content at an intermediation system in the communication path;

the intermediation system computing a size-based cost to access the received web content;

the intermediation system engaging in interstitial communication with the client station to receive user approval to pay the computed size-based cost; and

after receiving the user approval, the intermediation system sending the web content along the communication path to the client station.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein computing the size-based cost to access the web content comprises:

multiplying a charging-rate by a size of the web content.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein computing the size-based cost to access the web content further comprises:

selecting the charging rate based at least in part on a factor selected from the group consisting of (i) a service level of a user requesting the web content and (ii) a time of day.

7-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently amended) ~~The method of claim 13~~ In a communication system wherein web content is transmitted over a communication path from a content server to a client station in response to a request from the client station, a method comprising the following functions carried out while the web content is in transit from the content server to the client station and has thus left the content server but has not yet arrived at the client station:

receiving the web content at an intermediation system in the communication path;
the intermediation system computing a size-based cost to access the received web content;

the intermediation system engaging in interstitial communication with the client station to receive user approval to pay the computed size-based cost; and

after receiving the user approval, the intermediation system sending the web content along the communication path to the client station,

wherein the communication path extends from the content server, over a packet-switched network, and through an access channel to the client station, ~~the method further comprising: carrying out at least the adding~~ and wherein the intermediation system is within the access channel.

15. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[13]] 14, further comprising:

engaging in interstitial communication with the user, to collect user-payment of the size-based cost for the referenced web content.

16-26. (Cancelled)

27. (New) The method of claim 14, wherein computing the size-based cost to access the web content comprises:

multiplying a charging-rate by a size of the web content.

28. (New) The method of claim 27, wherein computing the size-based cost to access the web content further comprises:

selecting the charging rate based at least in part on a factor selected from the group consisting of (i) a service level of a user requesting the web content and (ii) a time of day.

29. (New) In a communication system wherein web content is transmitted over a communication path from a content server to a client station in response to a request from the client station, a method comprising the following functions carried out while the web content is in transit from the content server to the client station and has thus left the content server but has not yet arrived at the client station:

receiving the web content at an intermediation system in the communication path;

the intermediation system computing a size-based cost to access the received web content;

the intermediation system engaging in interstitial communication with the client station to receive user approval to pay the computed size-based cost; and

after receiving the user approval, the intermediation system sending the web content along the communication path to the client station,

wherein the communication path comprises an access channel between the client station and a packet-switched network, the method comprising carrying out the functions within the access channel.

30. (New) The method of claim 29, further comprising:

engaging in interstitial communication with the user, to collect user-payment of the size-based cost for the web content.

31. (New) The method of claim 29, wherein computing the size-based cost to access the web content comprises:

multiplying a charging-rate by a size of the web content.

32. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein computing the size-based cost to access the web content further comprises:

selecting the charging rate based at least in part on a factor selected from the group consisting of (i) a service level of a user requesting the web content and (ii) a time of day.

33. (New) The method of claim 4, further comprising:

engaging in interstitial communication with the user, to collect user-payment of the size-based cost for the web content.